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Office of
Sustainable
Fisheries

Annual Catch Limits *and* Accountability Measures

Presentation to the
Regional Fishery Management Council Training
October 2015
Silver Spring, MD



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Objectives

- Incorporate stock assessment information into setting ACLs
- Demonstrate skills in a test fishery



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Overview

- Requirements
- Reference Points
- Performance
- Wrap-up and group exercise



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MSA Amendments - 2007

“..establish a mechanism for specifying annual catch limits [ACLs] in the plan (including a multiyear plan), implementing regulations, or annual specifications, at a level such that overfishing does not occur in the fishery, including measures to ensure accountability [AMs].”

“..develop annual catch limits for each of its managed fisheries that may not exceed the fishing level recommendations of its scientific and statistical committee”



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National Standard 1

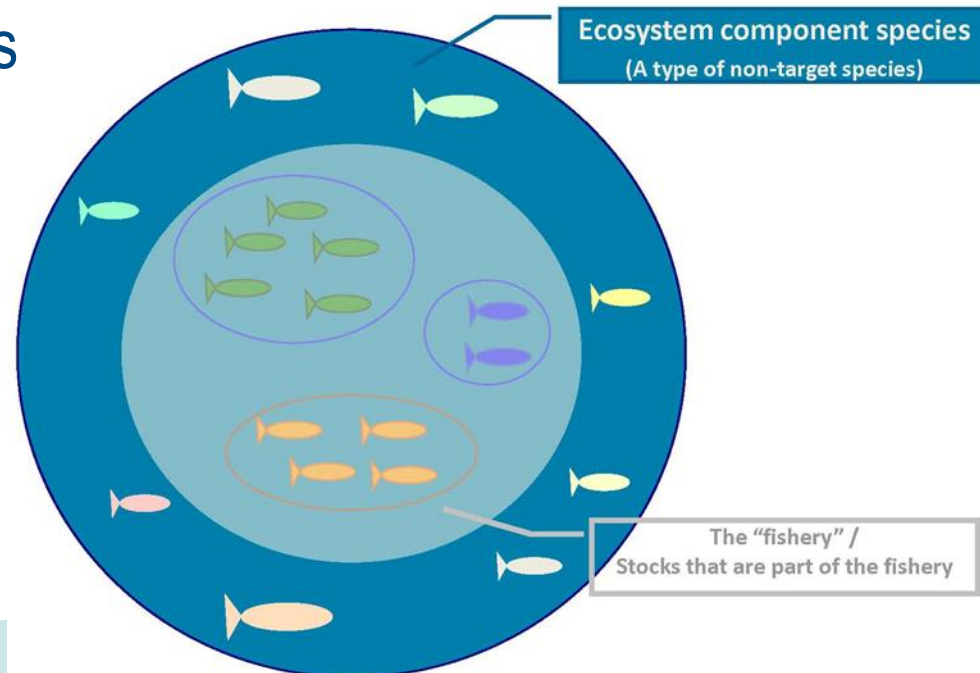
“Conservation and management measures shall **prevent overfishing** while achieving, on a continuing basis, the **optimum yield** from each fishery for the United States fishing industry.”



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Stocks with ACLs

- ACLs for “*each of its managed fisheries*”
 - FMPs vary in their inclusiveness of stocks
 - Both target and non-target stocks for greater ecosystem considerations
- Only target stocks
- Single species
- Complex





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Stocks with no ACLs

Exceptions to ACL requirements

- Under MSA
 - Species with annual life cycles, unless subject to overfishing
 - Stocks managed under an international agreement to which the U.S. is party
- Under Guidance
 - Stocks excepted under ecosystem considerations



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Accountability Measures (AMs)

- MSA requires ACLs, including “*measures to ensure accountability*”
- Two types of AMs:
 - To prevent reaching the ACL (inseason)
 - To address an overage of the ACL (post season)
 - Operational factors leading to an overage
 - Mitigate biological harm to the stock, if any



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Overview of Stocks with ACLs

	As of September 30, 2015	
Managed in a FMP N=471*	# of stocks meeting the ACL requirement	392
	# of stocks with international exemptions	68
	# of stocks with 1 year lifecycle exemptions	11
	# Ecosystem Component stocks	10

* Not including data collection only species.



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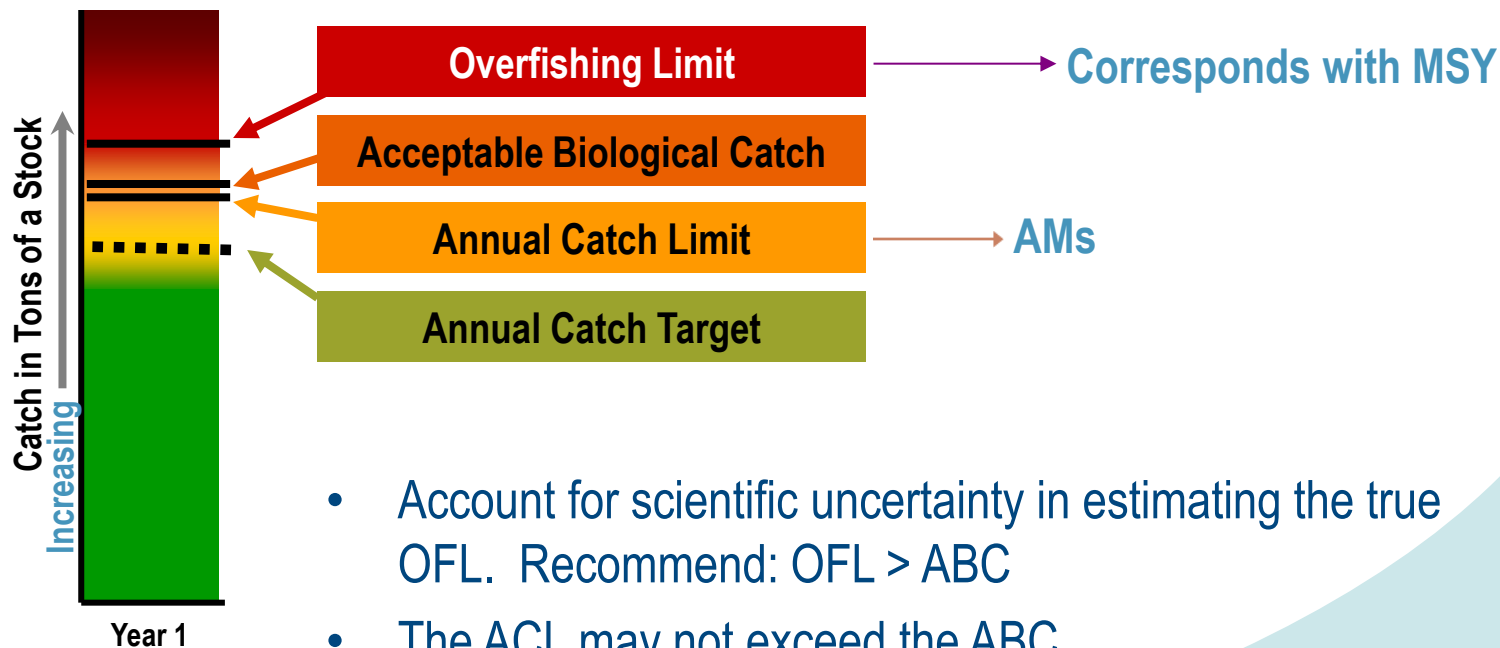
Question:
Accountability measures must deduct ACL overages in the following year.

1. True
2. False



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Know Your Reference Points

$$\text{OFL} \geq \text{ABC} \geq \text{ACL} \geq \text{ACT}$$


- Account for scientific uncertainty in estimating the true OFL. Recommend: $\text{OFL} > \text{ABC}$
- The ACL may not exceed the ABC.
- Account for management uncertainty in controlling the actual catch to the target. For example: $\text{ACL} > \text{ACT}$

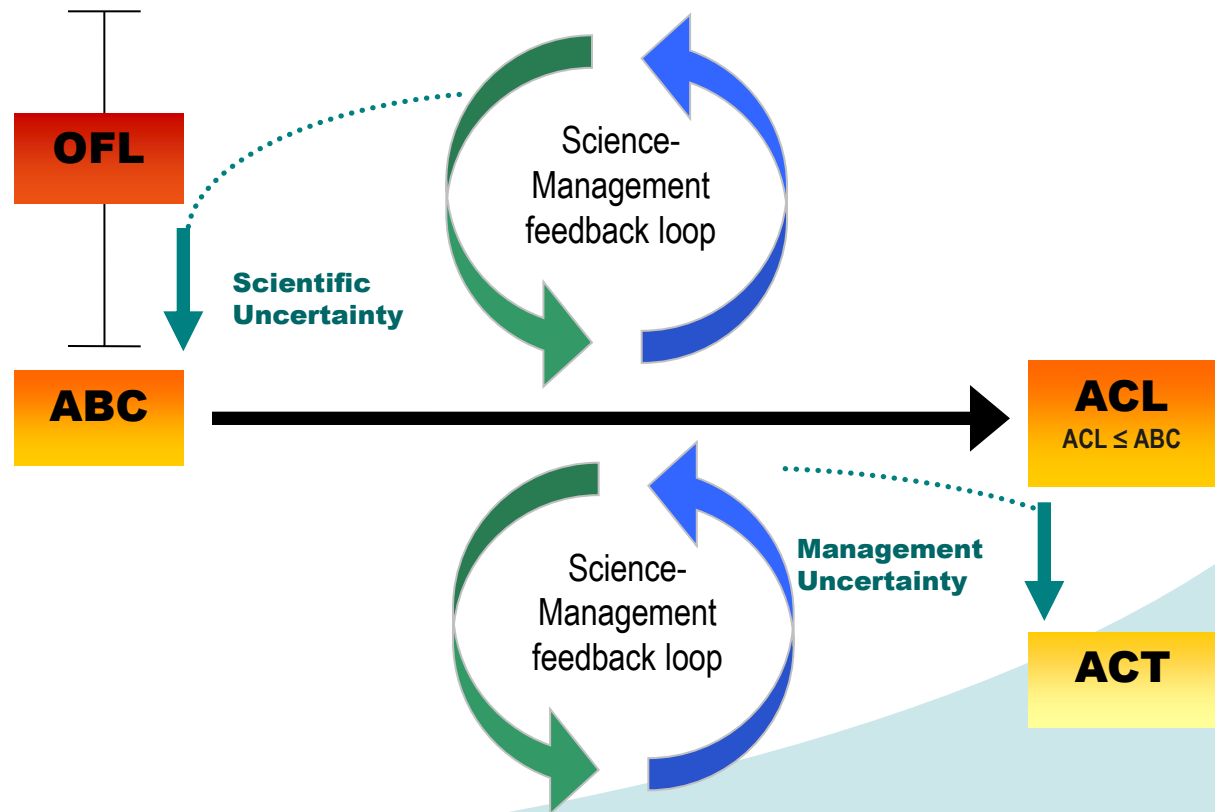


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Roles in Setting ACLs

SSC Role

Council Role





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Assessing the risk of overfishing

- ACL set “*such that overfishing does not occur*”
- Managers establish a policy, in consultation with the SSC, to use in specification of ABC such that there is an acceptably low risk that overfishing will occur.
- **ABC control rule**
 - *Scientific uncertainty*



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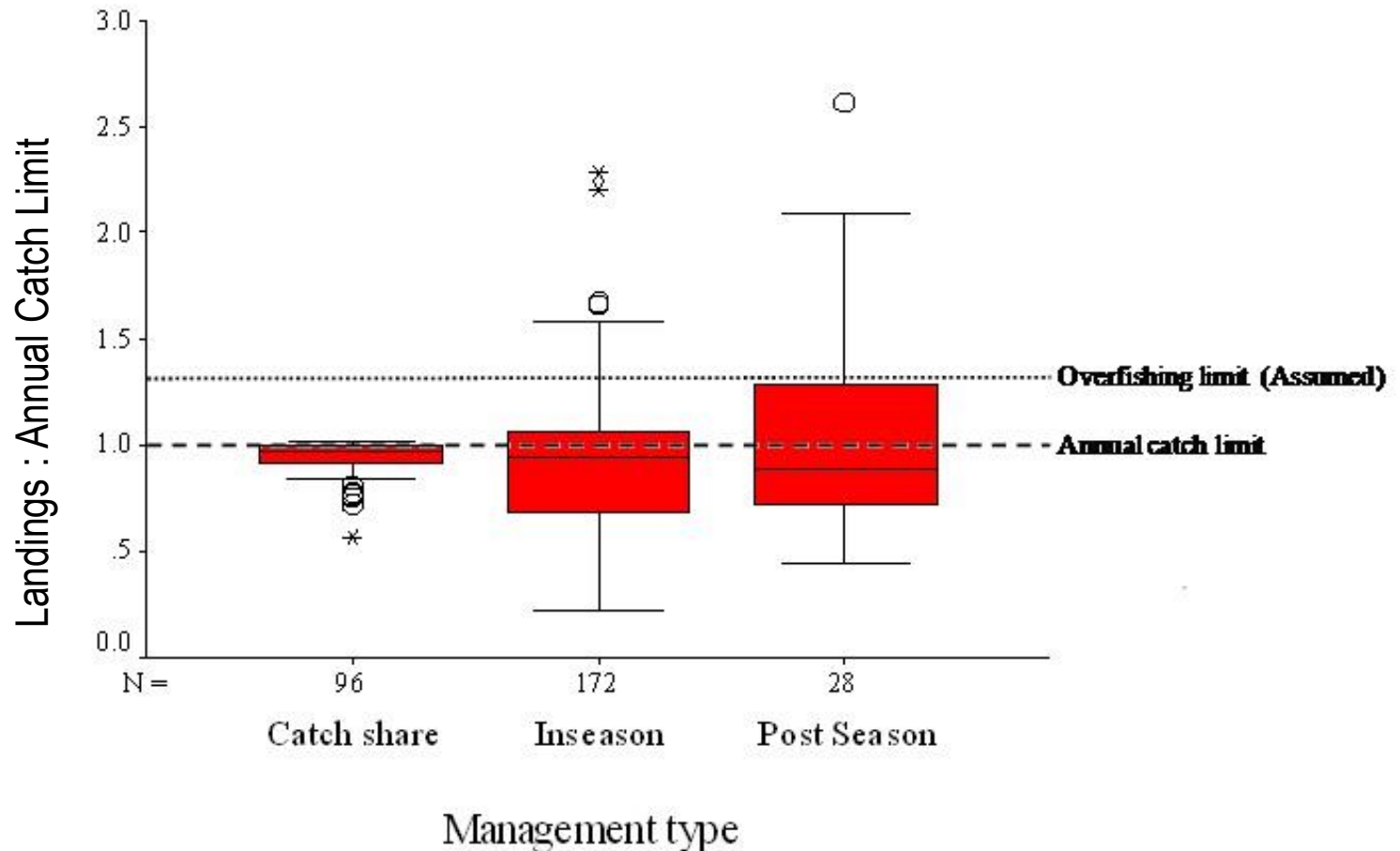
Management Uncertainty

- Management precision and setting appropriate catch levels
- **ACT control rule**
 - *Management uncertainty*



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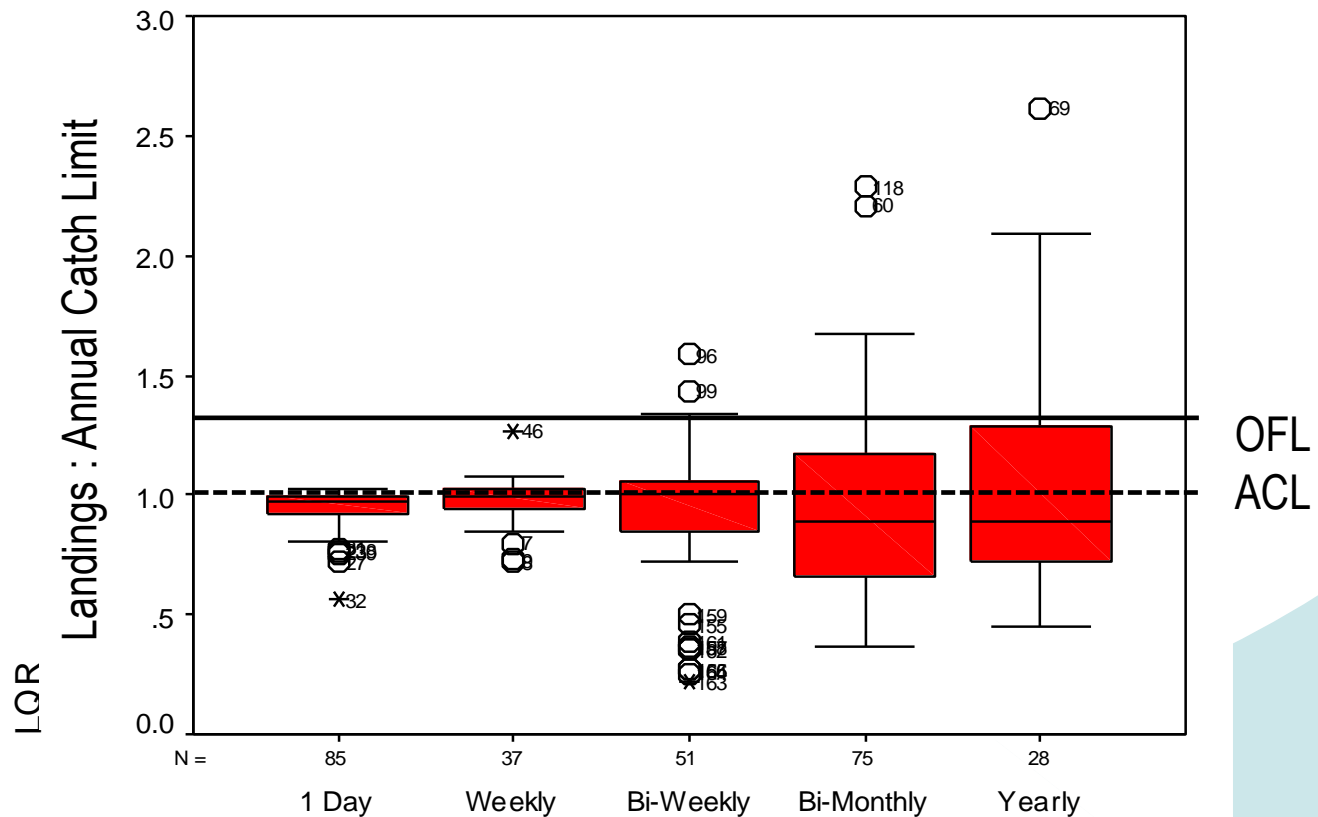
Management Uncertainty – By Management Type





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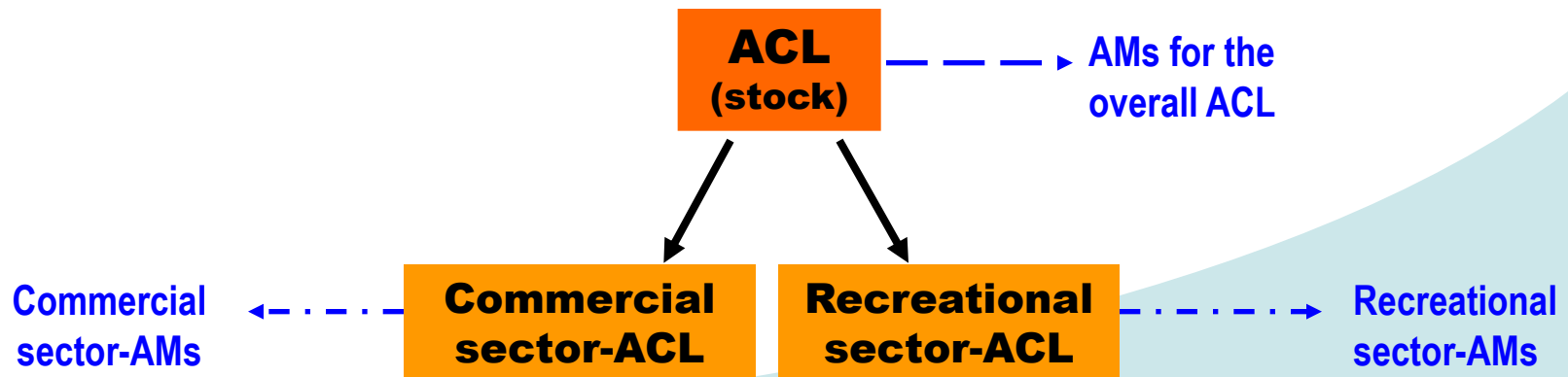
Management Uncertainty – By Reporting Frequency





Allocations - Sectors

- Optional - sub-divide a stock's ACL into "sector-ACLs".
- The sum of sector ACLs must not exceed overall ACL.
- AMs required for the overall ACL to protect the stock as a whole.
- For each sector-ACL, "sector-AMs" should be established.
- Sector-AMs should be fair and equitable.





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Question:

Which of these is NOT a source of management uncertainty?

1. Management program type.
2. Estimated discard mortality.
3. Reporting frequency.

Performance Standards



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- Because of uncertainty, there is always a chance that overfishing could occur.
- To prevent chronic overfishing:
 - The system of ACLs and AMs should be re-evaluated and modified if the ACL is exceeded *more than 1 in 4 years*.
 - A higher performance standard could be used if a stock is particularly vulnerable to the effects of overfishing.



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Tracking ACL Progress

- Reporting to NOAA (*ongoing*)
 - % of ACLs not exceeded nationally
 - Report quarterly
- Reporting to the White House (*complete*)
 - Performance measure that tracks subset of stocks to show overfishing is ending
 - 1 of 5 Agency Priority Goal measures in Department of Commerce
 - Available at [performance.gov](https://www.performance.gov)

Conceptual Model



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	SUBJECT TO OVERFISHING	NOT SUBJECT TO OVERFISHING
ACL EXCEEDED		
ACL NOT EXCEEDED		



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Question:
Performance standards are intended to keep overfishing from becoming a chronic condition.

- True
- False



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Summary

MSA requires:

- ACLs and AMs to end or prevent overfishing,
- ACLs may not exceed recommendations of SSC
- ACLs and AMs in all managed fisheries, with 2 exceptions.



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Summary

- ACLs and AMs for all stocks/stock complexes, unless excepted.
- Clearly account for scientific and management uncertainty.
- AMs prevent ACL overages, where possible, and address overages, if they occur.
- “Ecosystem component” stocks: flexibility in FMPs.
- Performance standards: address assumptions in ACL setting to prevent chronic overfishing

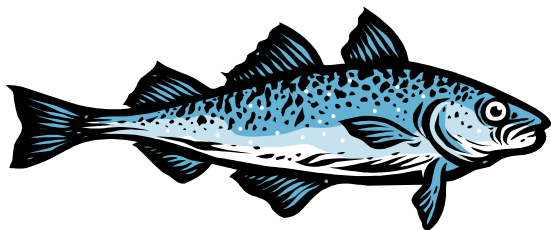


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Group Exercise

Given the data – set an ACL

Scenario 1 – Yellow-eye cod
Data Rich



Scenario 2 – Shadow shark
Data Poor

